THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

P.O. BOX 8 KING, ONT., CANADA

Volume 4, Number 5 September-October, 1965

By all accounts, the St. Louis RAGTIME FESTIVAL (August 13th-15th) was the event of the summer. Here is a firsthand report on the activities from Johnny Arpin who was one of the featured Festival performers (John was billed as "The Toronto Wizard"):

"Any ragtimers who chose to do other things when this exciting Ragtime Festival was taking place really did miss something. I, personally, feel that this event was a qualified success.

"My wife Anne and I had a swinging time. It was three days of excellent ragtime, meeting the devotees of this colorful music, and sheer good fun.

"High point of the Festival was the fine Saturday afternoon performance. It consisted of a color slide program with amusing commentary by the Ragtimers' own Al Stricker. Interspersed were tape interviews with Arthur Marshall and the playing of classic rags as their original sheet music covers flashed on the screen.

"The night programs were well attended and people were rewarded with the flashing stride piano displayed by Chicago's Bob Wright, the prairie style of Tom Shea, the rollicking rags of Knocky Parker and his banjo player, Marvin Montgomery, the inimitable St. Louis Ragtimers, the fine blues singing of Mary Pearl of St. Louis, and yours truly's 'two cents worth.'

"The Sunday afternoon levee concert was really 'hot,' and despite the temperature the crowd hung on right to the end. Everybody got into the act and we heard Mike Montgomery on piano, Frank Powers and Walt Gower on clarinets, and others too numerous to mention.

"Special thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Lou Waltman for the swingin' party on Sunday evening, and to the genial hosts Trebor Tichenor (Mr. Professor), Al Stricker, Don Franz and Bill Mason of the St. Louis Ragtimers.

"We're looking forward to the next Festival with anticipation!" -John Arpin

SHEET MUSIC REPRINT CLUB

The first "chapter" of the Reprint Club has just been completed, and we have received a lot of fine compliments about the quality and quantity of the music which was sent out to members over the past year. The second chapter has now commenced, and the first two selections will be mailed out in September. New participants are welcome, and may join now. Here's how the Reprint Club works:

The membership fee is $10, payable in advance. For this sum, participants are guaranteed a minimum of 13 rag reprints during the next 12 months. As membership increases above 13, free "bonus" reprints are sent out. (The first chapter received

18 rags in all for their ten dollars; this was made possible by the number of people who joined up.) At intervals of about four weeks we select and print two or more rags which are then mailed out. The music is printed on 8½" x 11" stiff paper, printed one side only. We try to select rags which are not in print elsewhere, which are first class rags, musically speaking, and which we feel will be valuable additions to anyone's library.

As recently announced in the Newsletter, and also in the Ragtime Review, we have merged our sheet music operations in order to better serve you ragophiles. Selections to be printed will be made by Russ Cassidy and Trebor Tichenor in St. Louis. The printing of the music, and the maintenance of stocks will be done in Toronto since mailing will also be handled here. Orders may be sent to either The Ragtime Society or the Ragtime Review.

Make sure you get your reprints at the lowest possible cost by joining the second chapter of the Reprint Club now. The following rags remain in stock from the first chapter of the Reprint Club, and they are now available at $1 each (minimum order $2):

Swanee Rag, Chas. L. Johnson
Lemon Drops - A Rag, Mike Bernard
Leola Two-Step, Scott Joplin
Dusty, May Aufderheide
Pitter-Patter Rag, Jos. M. Daly
Boone's Rag Medley #1, Blind Boone
Boone's Rag Medley #2, Blind Boone
Ramshackle Rag, Ted Snyder
The Sycamore, Joplin (Wm. H. Tyers arr.)
Foolishness Rag, Mort Weinstein
African Pas', Maurice Kerwin
Ma Ragtime Baby, Fred S. Stone
The Princess Rag, James Scott
Red Onion Rag, Abe Oleman
Bunch O' Blackberries, Abe Holzman
Ragtime Rosie (A Rag Song), Leslie-Muir

SHEET MUSIC

The many Toronto and area fans who enjoyed Glenn Rowell and John Maddox when they played together here will be glad to hear that Glenn has provided The Ragtime Society with several autographed copies of his own composition, RED SLIPPER RAG. Habitues of Toronto's former ragtime palace, Club 76, will no doubt recognize the tune. While not a rag in the true sense, it is nevertheless a worthwhile composition, and may be ordered from the Society at $1 per copy.

RSR #3

Production of RSR #3 is moving along nicely, and we will issue a special notice when the album is actually ready for sale. We know you'll really enjoy this LP, and we're working hard for an early release date.

RECORDS

Finally and at last, we have been able to obtain a limited supply of the album "Ragtime Piano" by Bob Darch (United Artists Record UAL 3120). This was Bob's first LP, recorded in 1960 and now out of print, and it remains as one of the finest examples of non-commercial or pre-Tin Pan Alley ragtime. Numbers included:

Maple Leaf Rag
Pear Blossoms
Swipesy Cake Walk
Original Rags
Alexander's Ragtime Band
The Russian Rag
The Da-Da Strain
Creole Belles
At A Georgia Camp Meeting
Florida Rag
Carbarlick Acid
Dill Pickles Rag

In the opinion of this reviewer (Jim Kinnear) and those who remember Darch in 1959 to 1961 at Toronto's Club 76, finer ragtime just cannot be heard today. This LP was one of the first to be issued of classic ragtime in the current revival, which itself is in no small part due to the efforts of Bob Darch. In response to repeated requests for the album, The Ragtime Society is pleased to announce that it has located a source and has purchased 50 copies only. (Elsewhere in this issue we have reproduced the album cover.) The price is $4 postpaid to Canada, the U.S.A. and the U.K.; $4.50 elsewhere. First come, first served, and you'd better act fast on this.

Max Morath, "Waltzes, Shouts, etc." EPIC LN24066

No longer available in Canada, and will not be stocked by the Society. We can bring in copies from the U.S.A. on demand but the cost will be increased to $4.50 plus the usual handling charge.

Hank Jones, "This Is Ragtime Now!" ABC 496

This LP is now available in Canada, and we are able to reduce the price to $4 plus handling.

AN EXPLANATION of the 'postage' or 'handling' charge for LP records: We regret any confusion we have caused by our seemingly different prices for the same article. Originally we had one prepaid price for a given record, but we soon found that postage to Sweden or Switzerland for example on one record was almost three times that to the U.K. or to the U.S.A. So we reduced our prices and added a flat charge for 'handling' based on location. We might also note that the handling charge is the same whether you order one record or five in any one parcel. However, if you order two LP's to be sent to different addresses, then the handling charge must apply to each. These charges apply on LP records only, which must be sent parcel post. Sheet music and books may be sent by a special rate which is the same anywhere in the world, and is included in our prices.

RECORD REVIEWS

"Treemonisha" Portents 3; Selections from the ragtime opera by Scott Joplin (1911) Carolyn Lewis, soprano, the Utah State University Concert Chorale, Ted Puffer, director and piano
also Five Classic Rags (1899-1917), played by Ann Charters

Reviewed by John Arpin

Finally, we get to hear some of the music of the much talked about opera by Scott Joplin - "Treemonisha." Sam Charters is to be congratulated for bringing out this record. The sound on the opera side is very good and the chorus is more than capable. Ted Puffer, a truly accomplished pianist, does fine work soloing the overture and the delightful Prelude to Act 3, as well as accompanying the chorus.

The overture starts with a driving syncopated theme but then gets lost in a spray of consecutive diminished chords, running octaves, arpeggios and the like. There is one other little theme that appears later which is reminiscent of "Les Preludes" by Franz Liszt. The Prelude to Act 3 is much more inspired and makes attractive listening. The chorus is gay and ebullient and blends nicely, particularly in the ragtime choruses "We're Goin' Around" and "Aunt Dinah has Blowed de Horn."

It is unfortunate that the text is not provided, particularly for the aria "The Sacred Tree" sung by Carolyn Lewis. Miss Lewis possesses a rich voice as well as a good sense of pitch, but doesn't keep her voice forward enough. All I could understand in the song was something about a baby crying and of course the title.

The closing number on this side is called "A Real Slow Drag." It must be a real drag for the poor sopranos as Joplin has them singing staccato notes up in the high B-flat region, but these gals carry it off nicely.

On the flip side are five Joplin rags: ORIGINAL RAGS, ELITE SYNCOPATIONS, REFLECTION RAG, BETHENA WALTZES and SOMETHING DOING, all played by Ann Charters. The sound is poor compared to the "opera" side. There is a flowing ragtime feeling in some sections, but generally the playing is labored. The side is marred by the inclusion of a seemingly unprepared BETHENA which has a few glaring wrong notes in the prettiest modulatory interlude that Joplin ever wrote.

All in all this record, which is dedicated to Harriet Janis, is a very good one and I heartily recommend it to all ragtimers.

We are grateful to Frederick B. Glaser, M.D., of Lexington, Ky. for the following comments which we offer as a record review:

I am writing to tell you about a recording I have recently acquired which I think may be of interest to members of The Ragtime Society. It is entitled "Ragtime - A Recorded Documentary, 1899-1929," and is on the Piedmont label, number PLP 13158. It is supposed to be available through Spottswood Music Company, Inc., Box 7102, Arlington, Virginia 22207. My copy came to me via The Record Hunter, 507 Fifth Avenue, New York 17.

The treasures on this recording are almost beyond belief. There are, for example, three bands which were recorded in 1899, including one of WHISTLING RUFUS played by the John Philip Sousa band. There are five solos by Vess L. Ossman, the great ragtime banjo player (the notes explain that the limited frequencies of the banjo were better suited to the recording equipment of the day than the piano), including a remarkable banjo version of the MAPLE LEAF RAG. There is a genuine coon song, EVERY DARKY HAD A RAGLAN ON, recorded in 1901. There is a piano recording by Mike Bernard, which to my possibly prejudiced ears supports the point of Blesh and Janis that his ragtime was distinctly second-class and derivative. And there is more. In short, I would think this an indispensable recording for anyone interested in ragtime.

While I am on the subject, let me warn you about two other recordings. A record called "Luckey & The Lion: Harlem Piano Solos by Luckey Roberts & Willie The Lion Smith," which presents a side by each player, is of interest for the ragtime enthusiast only in that it shows how a ragtime player may come to incorporate jazz elements into his productions. There is little ragtime here. Also, the Folkways documentary recording of Joseph F. Lamb, which you mentioned in your last Newsletter, is definitely of historical interest only. Mr. Lamb had forgotten most of his rags when he was discovered, and his hearing was markedly impaired. The performances are valiant attempts, but no more.

I have wondered why you have ignored Lou Bush (Joe "Fingers" Carr). He is a bit on the commercial side, to be sure, but he is a prodigious performer. For those who can tolerate their ragtime piano diluted with some brass, I would suggest his "Brassy Piano" on Warner Brothers W 1456, which contains DILL PICKLES, TIGER RAG, GRANDPA'S SPELLS by Jelly Roll Morton, and the most skillful rendition of MAPLE LEAF RAG that I have heard on records. He may not be "The Ragtime King" of course, nor yet "The World's Greatest Ragtime Piano Player," but what other kind of advertising can you expect from the Brothers Warner. He is, despite the slickness and ballyhoo, a very skillful performer.

PERSONALITY

Henri Parisot, one of the earliest members of The Ragtime Society and a faithful and tireless correspondent, has very kindly given his permission to reproduce his article "Vers un Ragtime Revival." It is with pleasure that we include it in this Newsletter as an extra.

Mr. Parisot, who lives in Paris, is employed as Literary Editor with Les Editions Flamarions, a publishing house. He is perfectly bilingual and makes much use of this talent in doing translating work. We have seen many examples of his work in the literary field, but perhaps the one which would appeal most to our readers is his translation into French of Alan Lomax's well known "Mister Jelly Roll."

Henri is also the proud possessor of an excellent and vast collection of LP records. What better use could possibly be made of this unique set of talents than his article on the following page which appeared recently in "Le Jazz Hot," a leading French magazine.

A complete listing of ragtime LP's has long been overdue; putting one together was another thing, however. Mr. Parisot has finally come up with what we consider to be a foremost step in the annals of recorded ragtime.

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VERS UN RAGTIME REVIVAL

PAR HENRI PARISOT

■ Après une éclipse totale de près d'un demi-siècle, le ragtime va peut-être connaître prochainement, en Amérique, un regain de faveur. Depuis quelque trois années déjà, la Ragtime Society, à King (Ontario) (1), et la Ragtime Review, à Florissant (Missouri) (2), publient, la première, une « newsletter » mensuelle, la seconde, un bulletin trimestriel, qui proposent, à leurs adhérents ou abonnés, d'excellents articles sur le ragtime et signalent, à ceux qui apprécient cette ravissante musique, toutes publications de livres, disques ou partitions de nature à les intéresser. Ainsi, un nombre encore relativement restreint mais, semble-t-il, toujours croissant d'amateurs, est mis en mesure de s'initier aux secrets de l'art des Scott Joplin, des James Scott, des Joseph Lamb et de leurs émules des « Gay Nineties ».

Le ragtime — faut-il le rappeler ? — est cette musique syncopée négro-américaine qui précéda le jazz et connut une immense vogue entre les années 1895 et 1917. Grosso modo, on peut dire du ragtime qu'il procède du cake-walk, danse nègre qui se pratiquait déjà dans le sud des Etats-Unis du temps de l'esclavage — et qui, elle-même, tirait son origine de certaines

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danses européennes (gigue, menuet, quadrille, polka) revues et caricaturées selon le mode humoristique africain — et qu'il se distingue du jazz, à première audition, par sa gaieté plus exubérante, sa mélodie plus suave, son rythme plus marqué et apparemment moins complexe. On a dit aussi qu'il s'en distinguait par son absence d'improvisation, mais cette affirmation apparaît des plus contestables à l'écoute des ragtimes enregistrés au piano par un Jelly Roll Morton ou un Dink Johnson, et il est vraisemblable que la renommée de ragtimers comme Tony Jackson ou Louis Chauvin a tenu précisément à la richesse de leurs improvisations pianistiques. Tout bien considéré, le ragtime ne serait donc pas autre chose que le plus ancien style de jazz connu. Du reste, au même titre que le jazz, le ragtime résulte du traitement de la musique populaire américano-européenne selon les principes rythmiques propres à la musique nègre. En tout état de cause, il ne diffère pas plus du jazz Nouvelle-Orléans que celui-ci ne diffère du middle jazz ou que ce dernier ne diffère du cool, du be-bop et des autres formes du jazz moderne.

Le pire handicap, pour le ragtime, ça a été d'être né, de s'être épanoui, puis de s'être démodé avant que le phonographe ne fût sorti de sa période de tâtonnements expérimentaux et, par conséquent, de n'avoir pu bénéficier de la diffusion et de la mise en conserve que le disque devait, par la suite, assurer au jazz Nouvelle-Orléans et autre. Pourtant, dès les années 1900, le ragtime, joué au piano, fut fréquemment enregistré, non pas, il est vrai, sur disques de phonographes, mais sur les rouleaux de carton perforé qui actionnaient les touches de ces pianos mécaniques, dits pianolas, fort répandus à la Belle Epoque. Les firmes Riverside, aux Etats-Unis, et London, en Angleterre, ont publié, au cours de ces dernières années, une série de remarquables albums consacrés à des enregistrements, sur microsillons, des exécutions gravées sur quelques-uns de ces rouleaux pour pianolas. Il s'agit des disques London AL 3515, 3523, 3542, 3563 (« Ragtime piano rolls », vol. 1, 2, 3, 4), 3519 (« Jelly Roll Morton solos »), 3553 (« Harlem piano roll »), 3507 (« Fats Waller solos »), 3511 et 3540 (« James p. Johnson solos ») et des Riverside RLP 12-112 (« The golden Age of Ragtime »), 12-126 (« Ragtime piano roll classics »), 12-10 (« James P. Johnson early solos »), 151 (« The stride piano of James P. Johnson ») et 12-103 (« Young Fats Waller »). La firme Folkways, de son côté, a publié, avec RBF 7, un passionnant recueil de « ragtime piano rolls ».

En dehors des rouleaux de pianolas, auxquels on reproche de ne pas restituer certaines nuances du jeu des pianistes, les meilleurs enregistrements de ragtimes sont, à notre avis, les plus anciens ou, tout au moins, ceux réalisés par des musiciens nés dans les années 1880-1890 et demeurés fidèles au style de leurs débuts. En Angleterre, la Vintage Jazz Music Society a édité, l'an dernier, deux remarquables albums (« A programme of Ragtime », VLP 1, et « When Grandma was a teenager », VLP 2) réunissant trente et un rags enregistrés — pour la plupart par des orchestres — entre 1897 et 1914 ; tandis qu'aux Etats-Unis une petite compagnie réalisait un album similaire (« Ragtime. A recorded documentary », Piedmont 13158), à partir de documents s'échelonnant sur les années comprises entre 1899 et 1929. Bien que résultant d'enregistrements effectués en décembre 1947, le disque de Bunk Johnson, « A programme by Bunk Johnson and his band » (Columbia 33SX 1015), nous offre une évocation de l'ère du ragtime empreinte d'une intense nostalgie. Un autre disque de vétérans, celui du Love-Jiles Ragtime Orchestra (Riverside RLP 379) donne, lui aussi, une idée, qui a toutes chances d'être exacte, de la musique jouée par les orchestres néo-orléanais à l'aube du XX^{e} siècle. Dans le domaine du « piano solo », les témoignages les plus magistraux concernant l'art du ragtime sont certainement ceux laissés par Jelly Morton : « A King of piano » (Brunswick BL 58.003), « Classic piano solos » (Riverside RLP 12-111), « Mr. Jelly Lord » (Riverside 12-132), « Rags and Blues » (Riverside 140), « Jelly Roll plays and sings » (Riverside 12-133), « New Orleans Memories » (Top Rank RLP 112), etc. Viennent ensuite les disques de Joseph Lamb (« A study in classic ragtime », Folkways FG 3562), de Brun Campbell (« The Professors », Euphonic Sound 1201 et 1202), de Dink Johnson (même titre et mêmes numéros, et aussi Storyville SEP 390), de Luckey Roberts (« Harlem piano », Good Time Jazz 12256, et « Harlem party piano », Riverside RLP 1056), de Willie the Lion Smith (« Reminiscing the piano greats », Vogue LD 008), d'Eubie Blake (« The Wizard of the ragtime piano », Vega 30 TCF 4, et « The old ragtime piano », 20th Century Fox 3039), de Joe Jordan et de Charles Thompson (« Golden Reunion in Ragtime », Stereoddities C 1900). D'autre part, d'excellentes interprétations de rags au piano se trouvent dispersées, à raison d'une ou deux par disque, sur un certain nombre de microsillons par ailleurs étrangers au ragtime. Parmi ces enregistrements — qu'il serait éminemment souhaitable de voir réunis en un recueil homogène — citons : Atlanta rag », par Jabo Williams (London AL 3537), « Mixed up rag » et « West coast rag », par Will Ezell (London AL 3539), « Everybody's rag », par Alonzo Yancey (Guilde du Jazz, J. 1023), « Fandangle », par Mary Lou Williams (Guilde du Jazz J. 1007), « Wild Flower rag », par Clarence Williams (Fontana 682.088 TL), « Shreveport farewell », par Little Brother Montgomery (RCA Victor 86.395), « Panama rag », par Billie Pierce (Tone Records 1 LP), « Maple leaf Rag », par Eubie Blake (Circle L 407) et « Eagle Rock Rag » par Leadbelly (Capitol T 1821). Mais la plupart des disques de ragtime actuellement dans le commerce sont dus à des « revivalistes », parmi lesquels il faut citer : le professeur de lettres-pianiste Knocky Parker, à qui l'on doit « les Œuvres complètes pour piano de Scott Joplin » (Audiophile AP-71-72) et « les Œuvres complètes pour piano de James Scott » (Audiophile AP-76-77) ainsi que plusieurs autres albums fort plaisants (« Professor's progress », London HA-U 2008 ; « Old rags », Audiophile AP 49 ; et « The Knocky Parker trio », London H-BU 1044) ; l'excellent Ralph Sutton (« Backroom piano », Down Home MGD-4, et « Ragtime USA », Roulette 25232) ; les « honky-tonkers » Johnny Maddox (« Authentic ragtime piano », Vogue LD 101), Joe Fingers Carr (« Mister Ragtime », Capitol T 760) et Winifred Atwell (« Double Seven », Decca LK 4166) ; le Californien Wally Rose (« Ragtime classics », Good Time Jabb M 12039, et « Cakewalk to Lindy Hop », Columbia CL 782) ; les Néo-Orléanais Tony Parenti (« Ragtime » Riverside DLP 12-205) et Armand Hug (« Rags and Blues », Golden Crest CR 3064, et « Ragtime Piano », Vogue EPG 1172) ; les chefs d'orchestre britanniques Chris Barber (« Elite Syncopations », Columbia 33SX 1245) et Ken Colyer (« They all played ragtime », Decca DFE 6466) ; le Français Claude Bolling (« Ragtime Bolling », Philips 424-292 PE) ; les « jeunes » Anne Charters (« Essay in ragtime », Folkways FG 3563, et « Joplin Bouquet », Portents 1), Bob Darch (« Ragtime Piano », United Artists UAL 3120) et Tom Shea (« Classic and modern rags », Ragtime Society Records 1 et « Prairie ragtime », RSR 2) ; et enfin, « last but not least », le jazzman noir Hank Jones qui, avec « This is ragtime now » (ABC-Paramount 496), nous propose une remarquable reconstitution de ce que pouvait être le vrai ragtime piano autour des années 1900.

Ces documents et témoignages, de valeur inégale, mais tous intéressants à divers titres, sont désormais assez nombreux pour permettre aux discophiles de se familiariser avec les multiples aspects d'une musique joyeuse et pleine de charme, dont l'importance historique et la valeur artistique ne le cèdent en rien à celles de n'importe quelle autre sorte de jazz, et qui pourtant, voici à peine une dizaine d'années, semblait vouée à un définitif oubli.

Henri PARISOT.

Long out of print, this LP - considered a classic and fast becoming a collector's item - is available again. See page 42 for details.

A professional ragtimer in full regalia - Ragtime "Dollar" Bill, alias K.W. Mayhercy, on the job at Holiday Inn in Kearney, Neb.

Ragtime Charlie Rasch (right) with Sister Kate and Tailgate Don. The trio, plus Chuck Kercher, holds forth Friday & Saturday nights at Bimbo's Italian Village in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

FOLIO REVIEW

"The Ragtime Songbook" by Ann Charters; Oak Publications CT 2044

Reviewed by John Arpin

Coming on the heels of Max Morath's "Guide to Ragtime," this handbook might very well have given the ragtime revival another shot in the arm. However, it falls far short of the former publication.

True, one must admit that in its 112 pages lies a wealth of material, i.e., Mrs. Charters' personal tracing of the roots of ragtime, appropriate pictures, quotes and many good songs. Unfortunately, though, the book has many strikes against it. The largest one is the inexcusable number of typographical errors, bad chord changes, many bars with wrong note values, missing accidentals, etc. On page 12 the staves are not in their proper order. On page 32 the banjo arrangement of ST. LOUIS TICKLE is most confusing since both it and the piano arrangement on the previous page are labelled 3rd strain -- yet have a harmonic structure entirely different except for the first few bars.

Another major fault is the use of the number OLD BLACK JOE - PARAPHRASE DE CONCERT on pages 23 and 24 as an early example of ragtime syncopation of a simple melody. It is compared to ANNIE LAURIE (RAGGED) from Ben Harney's Instructor (1897). It is a weak argument because there is no evidence of melodic syncopation at all in the former. However, in the latter the melody is quite obviously syncopated.

All is not lost, though. The book is quite well set out and has the makings of a good musical "companion" to banjo and guitar players. It also contains an interesting section on the sources of ragtime.

I would like to offer some suggestions in closing this review. If it is not too late or expensive, the book should be patiently proofread, mistakes in typography corrected and the right chord symbols should be added even where full piano score is printed. After all, a book should be indicative of the work and knowledge of the author and this opus, unfortunately, is not.

FROM OUR READERS

Percy Franks tells us he had a busy summer playing the Holiday Inn circuit in Rapid City, Pierre, Sioux Falls and Sioux City. Percy should be re-established back in Kansas City by now.

Marge Traeger says she received a note from the Gold Coast in Seattle, Wash., saying that Bob Darch played there for the last two weeks in August.

Our good friend Theo Stein writes about happenings in Ann Arbor, Mich: "Ragtime Charlie Rasch has added a fourth instrument to the group at Bimbo's here in town. The group, already consisting of Charlie, Sister Kate and Tailgate Don, now has acquired Chuck Kercher who plays flute, trumpet and clarinet. They really load the establishment on Fridays and Saturdays, with mostly good jazz and only a handful of sing-along. Charlie plays a 20-25 minute solo set at least once a night of authentic rags, blues and shouts -- all well received."

We've had requests from two members who would like to meet and get together with other Society members in their vicinity. First is Ralph Newman, P.O. Box 1047, Darien, Connecticut. Also Stephen Wright, 275 Fort Washington Ave., New York 32, N.Y., telephone 923-0776.

Albert McCarthy, editor of the U.K. publication "Jazz Monthly," says: "I am now getting back to proper planning (of the magazine), rather than slinging an issue together." He also promises to review RSR #2 soon, together with an account of the Society's activities.

John Munday writes: "I would like to ask a question which I hope will stimulate some dialogue on the subject of ragtime vs. folk music. The question is this: do you consider ragtime to be a type of folk music? Among people interested in folk music are some purists who would answer in the negative, because ragtime was a published and commercially distibuted and encouraged music. I myself like to think that ragtime is a type of folk music (perhaps because I like it and would like the Club here to have some interest in it.)" Would anyone care to say a few words in answer to John's question?

Richard Wagner, Ann Arbor, sent us the names of two new members - Frank Kuntz and Jack Wirth - and a bit of background on each: "'Frank Kuntz and His Ragtime Piano' is the billing they give this popular young keyboard artist who appears thrice weekly at the Del Rio Bar, 122 W. Washington Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan. For many moons now Frank has been presiding at the brilliantly lighted and gaily decorated upright at the popular Del Rio. His interest in the ragtime revival is reflected in his playing and along with Charlie Rasch who is appearing at Bimbo's Italian Village just up the street, Ann Arbor has two fine artists bringing the ragtime message. Frank also broadcasts over radio station WOIA. Frank's credentials are impressive -- a B.M. degree in piano from Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio, and he is now in the final stages of completing the requirements for his master's in piano at the University of Michigan School of Music. Frank also serves as accompanist for the University of Michigan Mens Glee Club.

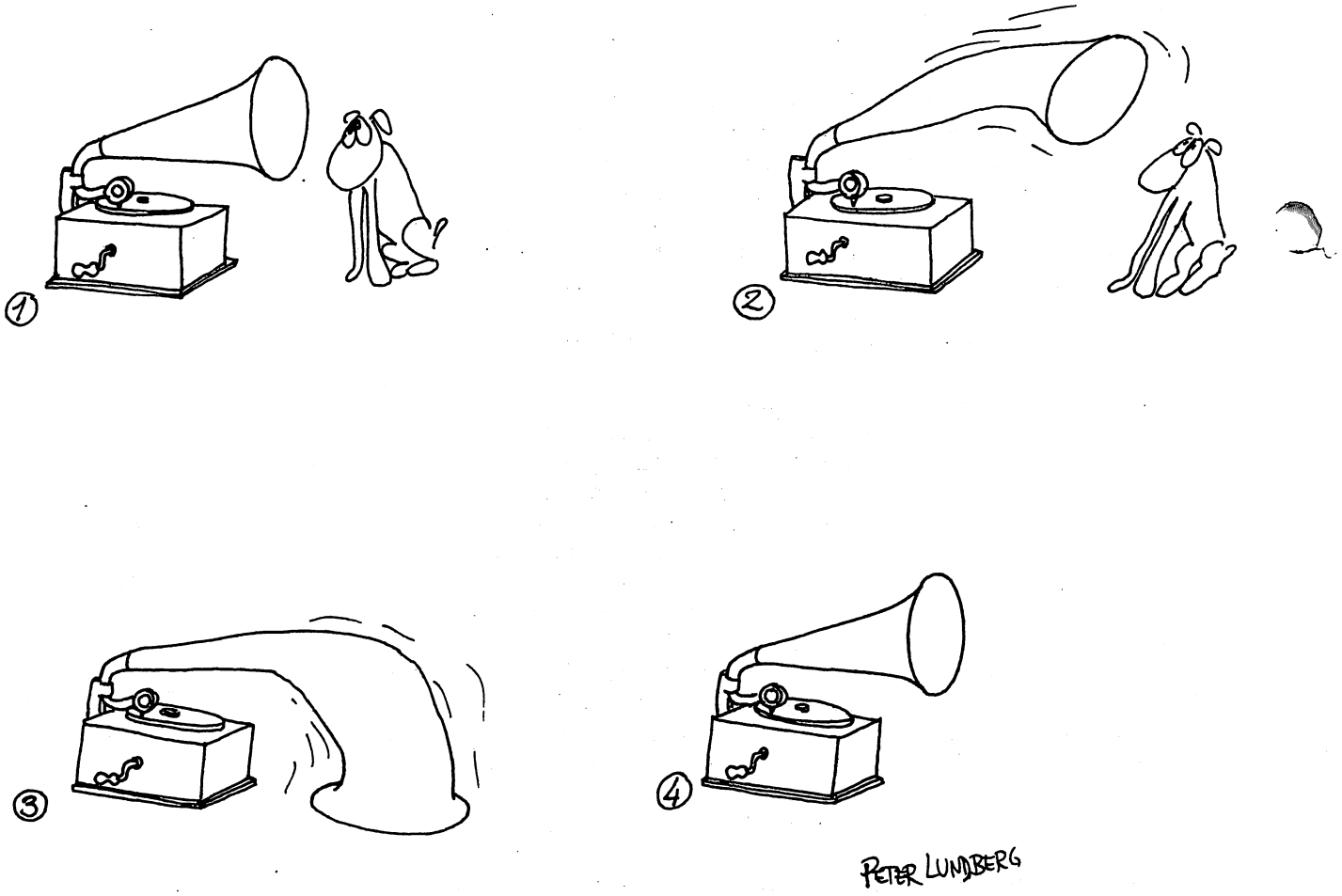
"Jack Wirth is owner and operator of Wirth Canoe Livery in Ann Arbor. The busines was founded in 1894 and has now become an institution. While the rental of canoes for trips on the beautiful Huron River is probably the main stock in trade, ragtime and piano roll buffs will find a visit to this place of considerable interest. Mr. Wirth possesses one of the finest collections of reproducing pianos and orchestrion devices to be found anywhere. His collection was the subject of a series produced and broadcast during the summer of 1964 by the Broadcast Service of the University of Michigan, radio station WUOM. The series was called "Money, Machines and Music" and was voted one of the station's top programs for 1964.

"Jack has been associated with the business for 22 years and in 1955 purchased it outright from the founder, Wm. J. Saunders, who at one time also operated a nickelodeon route. When he bought the business, along with it came a 1914 custom built Coinola in a state of disrepair. It is an imposing mechanism and Mr. Wirth believes that there is no other in the world exactly like it since it was built especially for the club house. It has a 65 note piano, mandolin attachment, 1½ octave glockenspiel, snare single and roll beater. He decided to restore the machine but had to start from scratch using whatever information that could be gleaned from books, magazines, trial and error and occasionally finding someone with some knowledge in the field. He finally restored it and discovered that in the process he had become something of a specialist. His services are in demand from places as remote as Disneyland in the restoration of these complicated mechanisms. Presently he has six other machines in the club house that he has restored to prime working order. A hundred-year-old August Dorschmeyer violin, drums, xylophones, organs, cymbals, etc. are included in the instrumentation.

"Jack's club house is a mecca for pianists. Ann Arbor has a tradition of good pianists -- Mike Momtgomery, Charlie Rasch, Tom Shea and Frank Kuntz, all well known ragtime artists, are visitors. Mr. Wirth also has some fine piano rolls by famous artists. He is particularly proud of a duet cut by James P. Johnson and Fats Waller, IF I COULD BE WITH YOU ONE HOUR TONIGHT. Mike Montgomery got the roll for him and he says that there are only a few in existence of the teacher-pupil duo.

"Ragtime fans will find a visit to the 'Nickelodeon Collection' as it is sometimes referred to here, stimulating and Mr. Wirth generous with background information."

A WORTHWHILE PUBLICATION

A few weeks ago we received the first issue of a new publication - the Vestal Press "House Organ" - which is filled with interesting features on the mechanical music and pipe organ field. It contains news of books, manuals, catalogs and records, all available from Vestal Press. Plus stories on people like Mike Montgomery and Larry Givens, and a feature article on "Early Mills Musical Machines."

We're not sure how often the House Organ is put ot - presumably two or three times a year - but it is a quality publication and very interesting. If you'd like to get on the mailing list, we suggest you write to the editor, Harvey Roehl, Vestal Press, Vestal, N.Y. The House Organ is distributed free, so naturally they would appreciate your business in return.